

NEWS

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Two Brothers Plead Guilty to String of Bank Burglaries

(More)

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CAMDEN – Two brothers pleaded guilty today for their roles in a string of southern New Jersey bank burglaries, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie announced.

Samuel Anderson, 44, of Egg Harbor City, and Donald Lee Britton, 46, of Browns Mills, both pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Renée M. Bumb to separate one-count Informations that charge them with bank larceny. Judge Bumb detained Anderson and Britton pending sentencing on Jan. 14.

At their plea hearings, both Anderson and Britton admitted that they participated with each other and a third brother, John Earl Anderson, 40, of Egg Harbor, to break into various banks to steal money from ATMs and teller drawers. They also admitted that they also stole the necessary equipment used to commit the burglaries.

At their plea hearings, Anderson and Britton admitted on April 29, 2007, they and John Earl Anderson went to the First Bank of Williamstown. Once at the bank, John Earl approach the bank and cut the telephone lines in order to disable the bank's alarm system, they both admitted. Both defendants admitted that John Earl told Samuel Anderson to be the “look-out” and to watch the bank from across the street underneath a highway billboard sign. Meanwhile, John Earl and Britton walked to a nearby construction business to steal tools, including a crow bar, an ax, a pair of shears, and welding equipment to use to break into the bank and the bank’s safe, Britton admitted. Both defendants admitted that John Earl and Britton also stole a truck that they used to transport all of the stolen equipment back to the bank. According to Anderson, once back at the bank, John Earl used the welding equipment in an attempt to open the main safe. Eventually, John Earl gave up trying to cut open the safe and took approximately \$1,800 from a teller’s drawer, both defendants admitted.

Anderson also admitted that June 4, 2007, he and John Earl burglarized a Wachovia Bank in Egg Harbor City. Anderson admitted that he assisted John Earl when he broke into an ATM located in the drive through area of the bank. Anderson admitted that John Earl used a stolen acetylene torch to cut into the ATM machine and steal approximately \$40,000 in cash from the ATM.

Furthermore, on June 21, 2007, Anderson admitted that he and John Earl were driven to a Wachovia Bank in Paterson. When they arrived, John Earl cut the telephone lines into the bank to disable the alarm system. Anderson admitted that he and John Earl then broke a door to enter the bank. They then broke into a gas station near the bank and stole welding equipment, Anderson admitted. They returned to the bank with the welding equipment and attempted to use the equipment to cut into an ATM safe inside the bank.

At Britton’s plea hearing, he also admitted to burglarizing a Wachovia Bank in Egg Harbor Township with John Earl Anderson on Dec. 12, 2005. Britton admitted that he assisted John Earl when he broke into an ATM located near the drive through of the bank. Britton admitted

that John Earl used a stolen acetylene torch to break into the ATM machine and steal approximately \$80,000 in cash..

A criminal Complaint charging Samuel and John Earl Anderson was signed on June 22, 2007.

On Sept. 25 a grand jury returned a one-count Indictment which charges John Earl Anderson with bank larceny. His trial is scheduled for Dec. 3.

The charge of bank larceny carries a statutory maximum penalty of 20 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000.

In determining an actual sentence, Judge Bumb will consult the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges that take into account the severity and characteristics of the offense, the defendant's criminal history, if any, and other factors. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

Parole has been abolished in the federal system. Defendants who are given custodial terms must serve nearly all that time.

Christie credited Special Agents of the FBI's Atlantic City Resident Agency, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Weysan Dun in Newark, with the investigation.

The Government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jason M. Richardson of the Criminal Division in Camden.

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Defense Attorneys:

Samuel Anderson - Christopher O'Malley, Esq. Assistant Federal Public Defender

Donald Lee Britton - Jerrold Colton, Esq. Cherry Hill